October 18, 18–

Dear Mr. Dresden,

Very sorry to miss you today. Your lovely bride tells me that you're off on business, and was (naturally) reluctant to let me wander about the estate in your absence. Please accept these short notes as a surety on a longer conversation, once you return.

First: I am returning the original architectural plans from your grandfather's remodel of Dresden Manor. I've made copies and will work from those. I have many ideas for how to brighten up "the old pile," as you like to call it, for your new bride.

Without a closer inspection (which I was today denied), I can't say why your grandfather blocked off that section of the house, but I think it unlikely to be interesting. By all reports, he was as eager a local historian as I am! I can't imagine that he would have blocked off a historical site.

Re: your library, once again, I must defer until I am able to inspect it. Based on the titles that you mentioned to me and the... unusual circumstances surrounding your mother's death (may she rest in peace), I appreciate your desire to be rid of the collection. I can certainly find buyers, but I can't estimate your return without details.

Please write upon return. Eager to begin work on both projects.

Respectfully,

Horace Chesterton

Consulting Engineer, Stagford

Dresden Manor

October 5, 18–

My dear, sweet Peter,

I have learned of your intention to marry that Smythe girl. How dare you? You, a Dresden and a Boddington, marrying a shopkeeper's daughter? After I have invested two decades of my life preparing you for greatness, you'd throw that future away for a common trollop? I will never allow this, never! I will harry you both like a Fury of old! You shall feel the wrath of a mother scorned!

Alas, my sweet boy, what chance could an innocent like you have had against such a siren? Don't worry, Mummy loves you. And thanks to your grandfather, of all people, I've found a way to not only save you from this new mistake of yours, but also to protect and guide you forever! Aren't we the luckiest family ever?

So let this be a lesson, you ungrateful wretch. Don't you ever think that, just because you've reached your majority, you are suddenly in charge. I rule this household, now and forever.

And whatever you see, darling, don't worry! Mummy knows what she's doing. What I do tonight, I do out of my deep love for you, and I forever remain

Your devoted Mum

To Peter
From: Your patient and
eternally forgiving Mum